

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 2, 2003

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2003–04 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 487**

**Introduced by Assembly Member Ridley-Thomas**

February 14, 2003

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An act to amend Section 2105 of, and to add Section 2105.1 to, the Elections Code, relating to elections.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 487, as amended, Ridley-Thomas. Voter registration.

Existing law requires the Secretary of State to adopt regulations requiring each county to design and implement programs to identify qualified electors who are not registered voters and to register those persons to vote.

This bill would revise these provisions to refer instead to outreach plans, provide that these outreach plans include certain specified elements, and require each county to provide its plan to the Secretary of State by January 1 of each year. By increasing the duties of local officials, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program. ~~The bill would also require the Secretary of State to establish a Voter Participation Unit to promote and coordinate statewide voter registration efforts, as specified.~~

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement, including the creation of a State Mandates Claims Fund to pay the costs of mandates that do not exceed \$1,000,000 statewide

and other procedures for claims whose statewide costs exceed \$1,000,000.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: yes.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature hereby finds and declares all of  
2 the following:

3 (a) The health and vitality of a democracy depends on the  
4 “consent of the governed” and this consent is expressed in part  
5 through registering to vote and voting.

6 (b) The historical decline of participation in elections is a  
7 serious public policy issue which, unless reversed, threatens to  
8 undermine this consent.

9 (c) Both state and local government should make significant  
10 efforts to provide every eligible citizen a simple and convenient  
11 opportunity to register to vote.

12 (d) Each generation has a responsibility to hand down to the  
13 next generation a knowledge and awareness of the importance of  
14 participating in the democratic process, and to encourage young  
15 people to appreciate and care for the delicate flame of democracy.

16 (e) Current levels of participation in the democratic process by  
17 young persons signal that the understanding of the importance of  
18 participation is not being passed to the next generation.

19 (f) The challenge is to restore the confidence of the general  
20 population in the electoral process by motivating youth to take the  
21 extra step of voting once they are eligible to register at 18.

22 SEC. 2. Section 2105 of the Elections Code is amended to  
23 read:

24 2105. (a) It is the intent of the Legislature that voter  
25 registration be maintained at the highest possible level. The  
26 Secretary of State shall adopt regulations requiring each county to  
27 design and implement an outreach plan intended to identify  
28 qualified electors who are not registered voters; and to register

those persons to vote. This plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- (1) Identification of target populations.
  - (2) School-based programs.
  - (3) Formation of an advisory committee composed of interested citizens and community organizations.
  - (4) A program to distribute registration forms throughout the community.
  - (5) A program to register voters at naturalization ceremonies.
  - (6) A program to identify name changes from marriage licenses.
  - (7) A program to identify and register persons who move within the county.
  - (8) A program to advertise in the local media.
- (b) Each county shall submit its outreach plan to the Secretary of State no later than January 1 each year.
- (c) If the Secretary of State finds that a county has not designed and implemented a plan meeting the prescribed minimum requirements, the Secretary of State shall design a plan for the county.

~~SEC. 3. Section 2105.1 is added to the Elections Code, to read:~~

~~2105.1. The Secretary of State shall establish a Voter Participation Unit to promote and coordinate statewide voter registration efforts with private businesses, community groups, and schools. These programs shall build public-private partnerships that cross county lines and provide visible leadership on the issues of voter registration and voting.~~

~~SEC. 4.—~~

~~SEC. 3.~~ Notwithstanding Section 17610 of the Government Code, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code. If the statewide cost of the claim for reimbursement does not exceed one million dollars (\$1,000,000), reimbursement shall be made from the State Mandates Claims Fund.